DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 389 221 FL 023 431

AUTHOR Thong, Iv
TITLE Language and Institutional Capacity Building in Cambodia: A Case Study of the Faculty of Business in Phnom Penh.
PUB DATE 12 Apr 95
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at an International Conference on Language in Development: The Stakeholders' Perspectives (2nd, Denpasar, Bali, April 12-15, 1995).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Business Administration Education; Case Studies; Change Strategies; *Curriculum Design; Curriculum Development; Developing Nations; Educational Change; Educational Policy; English; Foreign Countries; French; Higher Education; *Language Role; Program Descriptions; Second Language Instruction; *Second Languages; Uncommonly Taught Languages; Vietnamese
IDENTIFIERS *Cambodia

ABSTRACT

The recent restructuring of the curriculum of the Faculty of Business of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports in Phnom Penh (Cambodia) is described and offered as a model of the kind of reorganization occurring within Cambodia's higher education system. The history of language policy in the higher education system is chronicled briefly, identifying three phases: strong influence of Vietnamese language and curriculum (1980s); resurgence of former French influence (early 1990s); and expanding influence of English (1993-present). The rationale for and structure of the new four-year curriculum at the Faculty of Business, which includes general and business English throughout, are then detailed. The roles of Georgetown University (District of Columbia) in faculty development and of the University of San Francisco (California) in establishing a business law school are noted. The further development of a community-oriented small business training program in cooperation with Georgetown University, and the design of the program, are also described. It is noted that the Faculty of Business is the first academic institution in Cambodia to adopt the Anglo-Saxon curriculum model and English as the primary language taught. Need for further technical assistance in this area is highlighted. (MSE)

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ,
YOUTH AND SPORT
FACULTY OF BUSINESS ,
PHNOM PENH

INDONESIA
AUSTRALIA
LANGUAGE
FOUNDATION

PRESENTATION BY Mr. IV THONG
DIRECTOR , FACULTY OF BUSINESS , PHNOM PENH

ON

LANGUAGE AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING IN CAMBODIA : A CASE STUDY OF THE FACULTY OF BUSINESS IN PHNOM PENH

AT
THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE IN DEVELOPMENT

12 APRIL 1995

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PREFACE

Ladies, Gentlemen and Distinguished Participants:

On behalf of the Faculty of Business in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, I would like to thank you, the INDONESIA - AUSTRALIA LANGUAGE FOUNDATION and the Australia International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) for both sponsoring and organizing this Second International Conference on Language in Development.

The Paper which I will now deliver is entitled: Language and Institutional Capacity Building in Cambodia: A Case Study of the Faculty of Business in Phnom Penh.

INTRODUCTION

Higher Educational Institutions in Cambodia are currently undergoing a period of reform in which outdated curriculum models and language policies are being replaced by models which seek to address local, regional and international needs and concerns. The recent experience of the Faculty of Business in Phnom Penh represents a good model of this current phenomenon of institutional restructuring which is currently taking place throughout Cambodia's Higher Educational system.

Related to the theme of "language and institutional capacity building," I would like to divide my paper into three main ideas or sections:

i) A brief history of language policy at the Faculty of Business (FOB) in Phnom Penh.

ii) The recent restructuring of the curriculum at the Faculty of Business to make the program more in line with international standards.

iii) The attempt of the faculty of business to reach out to the local business community by introducing a program of continuing education which includes a Small Business Training Program.

PART I

A HISTORY OF LANGUAGE POLICY

Prior to 1975, Cambodia's system of higher education was modeled after that of France and the French language was the principal language of instruction at all Faculties and Institutes. The following two decades leading up to the present, however, have led to major upheavals within the social, economic, and cultural fabric of Cambodian society. All schools ceased to function between 1975 to 1979, and then they were slowly restored along different lines during the early 1980's.

During the last 15 years, we can identify at least three different phases related to language policy and institutional development. The first phase which lasted for an entire decade during the 1980's, represented a period when the Vietnamese language and curriculum exerted a strong influence on Cambodia's system of higher education. This was followed during the early 1990's by a resurgence of the former French influence. And finally the current phase which began in 1993 is marked by the expanding influence of English which is currently competing with the French language. These three phases can clearly be observed through a case study of the Faculty of Business.

While the Faculty of Business is a relatively new institution, it initially grew out of the Economic Science Institute (ESI) which was founded in 1984 in cooperation with the Faculty of Economics in Hanoi, Vietnam. From 1984 to 1991, students at the ESI were enrolled in a 5 year program. The first year was spent studying only the Vietnamese language. The following four years were then spent studying a curriculum which was largely set and taught by Vietnamese instructors from the Faculty of Economics in Hanoi. These instructors, who were placed in permanent residence at the ESI, taught courses related to such subjects/areas as Finance, Commerce, Agriculture, Industry and Socialist Planning.

With the opening up of Cambodia to the international community during the early 1990's, especially with the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in October of 1991, the curriculum and language policy at the ESI underwent many changes. Khmer and French languages now replaced the Vietnamese language as the language of instruction. Content courses were now taught by Khmer instructors, some of whom were sent for further training in France. Students, however, were now expected to study French for 15 hours per week in their first year of study. A new curriculum was also introduced which included such subjects as General Accounting, Industrial Economics, Financial Mathematics and Micro and Macro Economics.

While the French language played a major role during the period between 1991 to 1993, a major split developed in 1993 between those Faculty members who wanted to change to an English focus and those who wanted to continue under the French system. After disagreements over the question of language policy, the ESI split along French and English lines. The existing Institute was renamed the Faculty of Business (FOB), receiving support at first from the Asia Foundation, and later from Georgetown University in Washington D.C. and the University of San Francisco. The Economic Science Institute

(ESI) transferred to a new location and continued its pursuit of a French curriculum and Khmer/French language policy as opposed to the Khmer/English language policy and practical business school curriculum which was adopted by the newly established Faculty of Business.

The curriculum and language policy changes which resulted from this split in 1993 and the establishment of a new Faculty of Business will now be the focus of the following two sections of this paper.

PART II

CURRICULUM REFORM AT THE FOB

The rational for the curriculum and language policy changes implemented with the establishment of the FOB in 1993 was two fold: First to introduce English as a second language of study given its current international and regional status (i.e. its use among ASEAN countries). Secondly, the content of subjects needed to be changed in order to support Cambodia's overall transition to a market economy. It was thought that students would be better prepared for the private sector if they had a knowledge of English and also a familiarity with such subjects as accounting, marketing, management, etc. Given budgetary cutbacks by the Government which affected the employment opportunities of the graduating class, preparation for work in the private sector seemed of vital importance.

The new revised curriculum was designed in order to meet the needs of student employment upon graduation. The new business curriculum was divided into two stages: the first stage consisting of 2 years of general business instruction, while the latter stage involved 2 years of specialized business study (i.e. in either Manufacturing and Marketing or Accounting and Finance). Students in the program also study "Business English" which is geared to practical concerns such as report and business proposal writing, business correspondence and resume writing. The following is the current revised curriculum for each of the four years of study at the Faculty of Business:

Ministry of Higher & Technical Education
Economic Science Institute

KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
Nation - Religion - King

INSTRUCTIONAL CURRICULUM
FOR
FACULTY OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Year 1 : Introductory year
The goal in the first year is to expose the student to the many different functional skill areas of business.

First Semester		Second Semester	
Introduction to Business	45	Management II	45
Economics I	45	Economics II	45
Accounting I	45	Accounting II	45
Marketing I	45	Marketing II	45
English for Business	90	English for Business	90
Total Contact Hours	270	Total Contact Hours	270

Year 2 : Second year students will continue studies in the core curriculum Subjects of Accounting, Management, Quantitative Analysis and Marketing and add to the Knowledge gained during the first two semesters.

First Semester		Second Semester	
Business Policy & Procedures	45	Business Policy & Procedure II	45
Money and Banking	45	Taxation	45
Managerial Accounting	45	Cost Accounting	45
Business Statistics	45	Market Research	45
English	90	English	90
Total Contact Hours	270	Total Contact Hours	270

Year 3 : In the third year students are required to select an area of specialization. The choice will be either Manufacturing and Marketing or Accounting and Finance.

First Semester

Core Courses

Organizational Behavior I	45
Personnel Management / Labor Relations	45
Fundamentals of Corporate Finance	45
Business English	45
	180

Specialized Courses

Manufacturing and Marketing		Accounting and Finance	
Production Management	45	Financial Management	45
Marketing Management	45	International Trade	45
Total Contact Hours	270	Total Contact Hours	270

Second Semester

Core Courses

Organizational Behavior II	45
Human Relations	45
Business Law	45
Business English	45
	180

Specialized Courses

Manufacturing and Marketing		Accounting and Finance	
Manufacturing Technology	45	Financial Institutions	45
Individual R & D Project on Manufacturing and Marketing	45	Individual R & D Project of Financial / Accounting Subject	45
Total Contact Hours	270	Total Contact Hours	270

Year 4 : Fourth year students will be expected to spend a significant portion of their time doing individual research and expanding their knowledge base.

First Semester

Core Courses

Business Ethics	45
Cambodian National Economic Policy	45
Cambodian Industry and Trade	45
Cambodian Agribusiness	45

Specialized Courses

Manufacturing and Marketing		Accounting and Finance	
Inventory Management and Logistics	45	Investment Management	45
Advertising	45	Principles of Auditing	45
Total Contact Hours	270	Total Contact Hours	270

Second Semester

Core Courses

Research Methodology	45
R & D of Business Plans	90
Seminars	90

Specialized Courses

Manufacturing and Marketing		Accounting and Finance	
Capital Budgeting and Investment	45	Topics in Corporate Finance	45
Total Hours	270	Total Hours	270

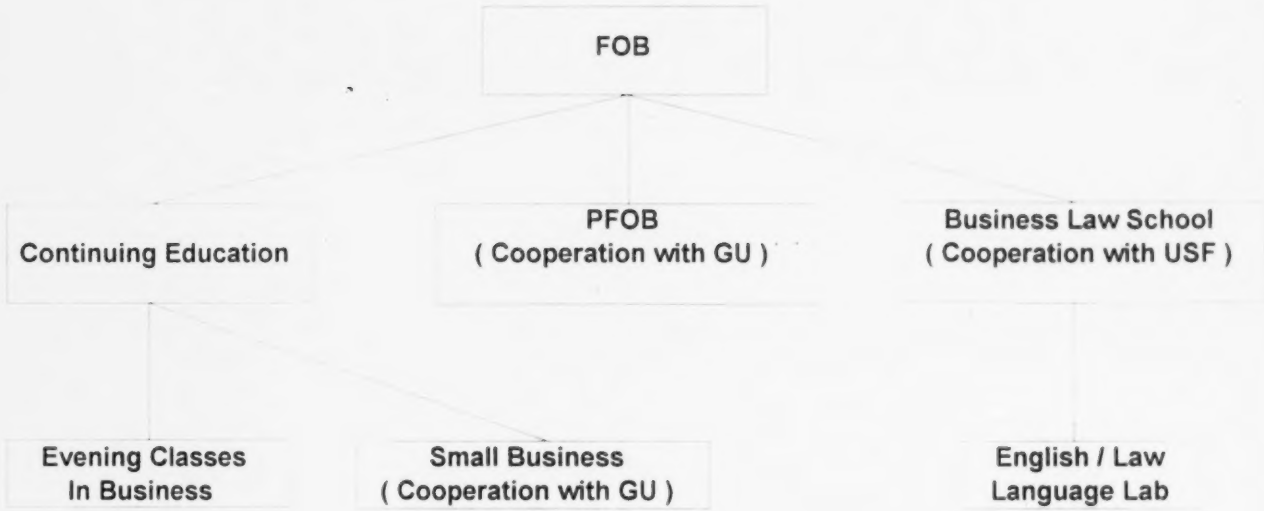
Comprehensive Final Examinations
Submission and Presentation of Business Plans
Successful ccmpletion of the above program of study entitles the student to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

Given in Phnom Penh, October 19, 1993
THE MINISTER

TOL LAH

Since January of 1995, the program at the FOB has undergone a further expansion as a result of assistance from both Georgetown University of Washington D.C. which is a current advisor to our existing Business School and also from the University of San Francisco Law School which is in the process of establishing a Business Law School as part of the FOB structure. The following is the current organizational chart of the rapidly expanding FOB.

Organizational Chart of Program Activities At FOB in Phnom Penh



The main objectives of the Georgetown Program (PFOB) which currently has 4 instructors working at the Faculty are:

i) Training of current FOB faculty in selected business subjects and in teaching methodology.

ii) Making arrangements for the training of selected faculty members at business institutions in South-East Asia and the United States.

iii) Making recommendations to improve the curriculum and helping out in the selection process concerning textbooks and materials for translation into Khmer.

iv) Conducting several business courses in English with Khmer translation to fourth year students.

The University of San Francisco Law School has also recently started teaching classes in Business law at the FOB with further plans to assist in the establishment of a School of Business Law within the Faculty of Business.

The USF program is substantially different from its French supported counterpart the Faculty de Droit in both form and substance. The USF program is taught in English but interpreters translate the lecture into Khmer. The materials that have been developed by USF for their courses are also translated into Khmer.

There is strong support for the argument that the economic future of Cambodia requires us to become involved in international and regional business and financial transactions that are regularly conducted in the English based Common Law. It is equally important and a legal requirement that the more traditional domestic legal matters be conducted in Khmer. In addition to the legal courses, USF is establishing an English studies program for their students which will develop a level of competence in English and then help the students with understanding legal terms and concepts written or spoken in English.

While there is a genuine concern about having two separate law schools, the missions and course offerings of the two Schools are very different. The French Faculty de Droit requires its courses to be taught in the French language and focuses on Administrative law and procedures. While this concentration provides trained judges and prosecutors, it does not meet the needs of training qualified lawyers to develop the business and commercial interests of Cambodia. If Cambodia is to end its dependence on foreign economic aid, it must take full advantage of its natural resources and the many talents of its people to establish itself as a country with a strong and sustainable economy.

PART III

COMMUNITY FOCUS

In 1993, the FOB also established a Small Business Training Program in cooperation with Georgetown University as part of a larger plan to develop a system of continuing education in order to meet the needs of the local business community.

Four promotions consisting of approximately 55 students each have currently graduated from this program which has been open to members of the community. Admission to the program is free, though applicants are expected to pass an entrance examination which also has a small English component. Participants in the Program must be over 18 years of age and have some interest/experience in business. The backgrounds of the participants are quite diverse and include both small business men and women, students, and government employees.

Participants in the program undergo a four month intensive program of study which includes subjects in accounting, management, marketing and business English. The

program utilizes existing Khmer instructors at the FOB with the exception of a few expat instructors who teach in English with Khmer translation.

The program also includes weekly guest lecturers, who are usually successful members of the local business community, and weekly field visits to local manufacturing and service related companies are also arranged for the students.

At the end of the program, participants are expected to undergo an internship program at a local company or business in order to obtain practical on the job training and students are also expected to present a group business plan focusing on the setting up of an actual small business.

Recently, this Small Business community outreach program has been expanded to Battambang Province in the north-western part of the country and instructors from the FOB travel to Battambang on a rotation basis to teach in the program which is hosted by the regional Teacher Training College. Since October of 1994, a new higher level Small Business course has also been added at the FOB location which is offered to individuals who have already graduated with a Bachelor's degree from a local Faculty and who wish to pursue studies in practical business subjects. This program is taught largely in English.

CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude by noting that the Faculty of Business is the first academic institution in Cambodia to adopt the Anglo-Saxon system. We strongly feel that this Anglo-Saxon curriculum model is both important and necessary in order to meet the future needs of Cambodian students. It is also a model which is being strongly supported by both the existing faculty and student body.

Our main difficulty, however, is that we lack both experienced teachers of English and good English language materials which are necessary in order to better develop the foundation of our future program at the FOB. While Georgetown University and the University of San Francisco are currently improving the business and law component of the curriculum, we currently need assistance in terms of recruiting of foreign English teachers, developing a language lab and obtaining up-to-date training materials for the further expansion of our English program. We formerly received some assistance from the Overseas Service Bureau during 1992 in this matter and now we are currently looking to expand our cooperation with other regional English language programs in the Asia region.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION BY CONFERENCE MEMBERS

Should the Faculty of Business attempt to introduce a one year mini-Masters program in Business which is taught solely in the English language?